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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

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In the Matter of)	
)	
Telephone Number Portability)	CC Docket No. 95-116
)	NSD-L 98-83
North American Numbering Council)	
Report on High-Volume Call-In Networks)	

COMMENTS

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**COMMENTS OF MCI TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORP. ON
LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY FOR HIGH-VOLUME CALL-IN NETWORKS**

MCI Telecommunications Corp. ("MCI"), by its attorneys, submits these comments in response to the Public Notice (DA 98-1080, released June 8, 1998) by the Common Carrier Bureau seeking comment on the recommendations of the North American Numbering Council ("NANC") regarding incorporation of high-volume call-in ("HVCI") networks into the local number portability ("LNP") scheme.

MCI does not oppose Commission adoption of the NANC's recommendations for HVCIs, provided that the Commission (1) authorizes the non-compliant technical solution proposed by NANC to remain in place only until alternative network routing arrangements can be developed by industry that meet the Commission's LNP performance criteria, and (2) establishes cost-recovery mechanisms for HVCI network LNP costs that are competitively neutral and consistent with the Commission's recent *LNP Cost Recovery Order*.¹ These modifications are necessary to ensure that the growth of local competition for HVCIs, commonly referred to as "choke

¹ *Telephone Number Portability*, Third Report and Order, CC Docket No. 95-116, RM 8535, FCC 98-82 (rel. May 12, 1998) ("*LNP Cost Recovery Order*").

networks,” is not impeded by LNP mechanisms that result in inefficient number utilization and that rely on incumbent LEC (“ILEC”) administration of routing information for HVCI networks.

DISCUSSION

On May 28, 1998, the NANC forwarded to the Bureau a February 18, 1998 report by the NANC’s Local Number Portability Administration Working Group (“LNPA-WG”) on the provision of LNP for HVCI.² The *NANC HVCI Report* resulted from the Commission’s request in the *Second Report and Order* that the NANC study the matter of HVCI further and prepare recommendations on how to best incorporate HVCI networks into the LNP scheme.³ The Report recommends that the Commission adopt a proposal developed by SBC Communications, Inc. (“SBC”) -- and used internally in SBC’s network -- that allows for porting of HVCI numbers without using the location routing number (“LRN”) approach already deployed for permanent LNP. This SBC “non-LRN solution” utilizes routing restrictions on HVCI NXX codes and the establishment of dedicated “choke trunk groups” from the ILEC end office to the network of the competitive LEC serving the call-in customer. *NANC HVCI Report* § 2.1.1.

There is no dispute that HVCI networks present substantial challenges to the existing permanent LNP network structure, because portability of HVCI numbers could generate very substantial numbers of LNP database queries, causing potential congestion at Service Control Points (“SCPs”) and associated SS7 signaling links. Further, due to its volume, HVCI traffic is ordinarily routed on special trunk groups and subjected to extraordinary network management

² *High Volume Call-In Networks*, Local Number Portability Administration Working Group (Feb. 18, 1998)(“*NANC HVCI Report*”).

³ *Telephone Number Portability*, Second Report and Order, CC Docket No. 95-116, FCC 97-289 (rel. Aug. 18, 1997)(“*LNP Cost Recovery Order*”).

controls designed to avoid network congestion during “spikes” of HVCI events, such as radio call-in promotions. *See NANC HVCI Report* § 1.3.

The SBC non-LRN solution achieved consensus in the LNPA-WG principally because ILECs opposed use of LRN routing for HVCI networks. It is a workable short-term solution to incorporation of HVCI into LNP, but by definition does *not* integrate HVCI networks into the existing NPACs. This has several significant impacts on numbering administration and network performance. First, the non-LRN approach necessitates use of a new NXX for customers “that are not already assigned an HVCI number.” *NANC HVCI Report* § 2.1.2.A. Second, the LNPA-WG was unable to certify that the SBC proposal does not result in degradation of service quality when customers switch service providers. *Id.* § 2.1.2.B. Third, the SBC solution requires that HVCI calls be routed to the ILEC for switching to the dedicated trunks interconnecting the customer’s service provider, thus requiring “ILEC administration of routing information for HVCI networks.” *Id.* § 2.1.2.D.

1. LNP Performance Criteria.

As the *NANC HVCI Report* discusses, these problems with the SBC non-LRN solution mean that the proposal does not satisfy the Commission’s LNP “performance criteria.” The Commission has determined that the long-term database method for number portability must “efficiently use numbering resources” and may not “result in unreasonable degradation in service quality or network reliability when customers switch carriers.” 47 C.F.R. §§ 52.23(a)(2), (a)(5). The SBC approach results in inefficient NXX assignments and has not been shown to maintain service quality for HVCI networks. Additionally, the SBC approach is directly inconsistent with the requirement that LNP administration be performed by entities that are not “aligned with any particular telecommunications industry segment,” 47 C.F.R. § 52.21, because the use of

dedicated choke trunk groups means that the ILEC will be performing routing on all calls destined for CLEC HVCI customers.

MCI agrees with the *NANC HVCI Report* that the SBC proposal is preferable at this time to AT&T's proposed use of LRN for HVCI's because implementation of AT&T's networking arrangement would require significant development, delaying HVCI portability for the public. MCI does not concur, however, with any conclusion that use of LRN for HVCI networks will necessarily "increase the risk of network reliability failures," as the *NANC HVCI Report* implies. *NANC HVCI Report* § 2.2.3.D. While network degradation for CLECs arising from the non-LRN approach appears highly likely, the network reliability risks of LRN, in contrast, relate only the scale and capacity of SCPs, which are frequently enlarged to handle steadily increasing signaling traffic on the PSTN. The reliability risks may therefore prove ultimately to be insignificant.

Because the non-LRN approach does not comply with the LNP performance criteria, the Commission should adopt the Report as a temporary solution only. The Commission should authorize provision of number portability for HVCI networks without use of LRNs (and thus without use of the LNP database) only until the industry is able to devote increased resources to studying the impact of HVCI network volumes on LNP and to develop alternative technical approaches for incorporating HVCI networks into the permanent LNP scheme. The Commission should accordingly direct the NANC to revisit these issues and submit a further report on LNP for HVCI networks within 18 months. At that time, the Commission will be in a better position to determine if the potential network reliability objections to use of LRN for HVCI numbers are realistic, and whether other network engineering solutions have been, or can be, developed that avoid reliance on ILEC routing and ILEC-administered HVCI choke trunk groups for LNP.

2. LNP Cost Recovery

The *NANC HVCI Report* does not specifically address a mechanism for recovery of LNP costs incurred for HVCI networks. Although it notes that the provision of dedicated trunk groups could have a disparate effect on the incremental costs of CLECs serving HVCI customers, the Report does not recommend how LNP costs for HVCI networks should be categorized under the Commission's recent *LNP Cost Recovery Order*. *NANC HVCI Report* § 2.1.2.C.

The *LNP Cost Recovery Order* requires that each service provider, both ILECs and CLECs, bear their own "carrier-specific" LNP costs, including the allocated portion of the "shared" LNP costs and each carrier's own database query costs (*Order* ¶ 137). Before approving the *NANC HVCI Report*, therefore, the Commission must determine whether the dedicated choke trunk groups required by the SBC non-LRN approach should be classified as shared or carrier-specific LNP costs, and how that classification comports with the statutory mandate that "the cost of establishing telecommunications numbering administration arrangements and number portability" be distributed among all telecommunications carriers on a "competitively neutral" basis.⁴

MCI suggests that the correct answer to this inquiry is that the costs for trunk groups associated with providing LNP for HVCI numbers should be categorized as a "shared" LNP cost recoverable from all contributing carriers. As the *NANC HVCI Report* describes, the reason for use of these special trunking arrangements is to maintain separation between HVCI traffic and the LNP SCPs, in order to assure that the "choke" volumes sometimes experienced in

⁴ 47 U.S.C. § 251(e)(2).

high-volume call-in situations do not detract from LNP network performance. In other words, carriers serving HVCI network customers are being required to establish special, dedicated trunking arrangements -- which they would otherwise not do -- in order to protect the LNP database, and the PSTN, from possible "overload" during HVCI events. (These same conclusions also apply to the administrative costs associated with ILEC assignment of HVCI numbers to CLECs for existing mass calling NXXs, as specified in the NANC recommendations.) It is clear, therefore, that the facilities and numbering resources deployed in the non-LRN approach recommended by the NANC are not properly considered "carrier-specific" LNP costs because, like the database itself, these facilities are specifically designed to benefit the network in general -- that is, all carriers and end users -- rather than just the specific carrier to whom the HVCI numbers have been ported.

CONCLUSION

The Commission should adopt the NANC-recommended proposal for HVCI number portability as a short-term solution, and require the NACN to submit a further report on integrating HVCI networks into the LNP system within 18 months. Costs incurred for dedicated

“choke trunk groups” and related NXX assignments for HVCI number portability should be classified as shared costs under the *LNP Cost Recovery Order*.

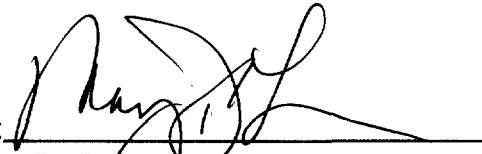
Respectfully submitted,

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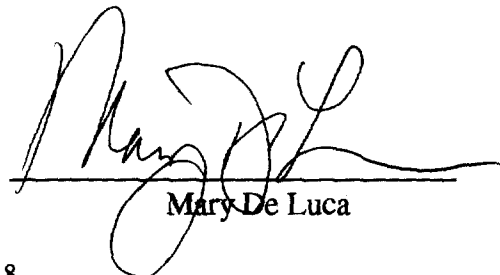
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